

May 5, 2020

Children, Families, Health, and
Human Services Interim Committee
Legislative Services Division
Attn: Sue O'Connell
P.O. Box 201706
Helena, MT 59624-1706

RE: Request for retainer days under the ESPDT Program

At A Plus Health Care, we provide Personal Care (PAS and CFC), Waiver services and Private Duty nursing to over 1600 members across Montana. We have been providing these services to Montanans for almost 30 years. I have worked for the company for over 15 years in various roles.

I am writing this letter regarding the HJR 50 Study: Senior and Long Term Care. We would like to request the committee to review the Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnosis & Treatment (EPSDT), policy guidelines as they relate to Private Duty Nursing to revise them to include provisions of retainer days.

As one of only three PDN provider in the State, we are challenged with staffing some of the most precious and fragile cases in our State which is nursing services for children in their homes. These children have various medical needs and disabilities. When a child becomes ill and is hospitalized or is required to travel away from our State for medical appointments, our nurses are left with no work and as such retainer days should be considered for these services under ESPDT just as they are for adults under the Big Sky waiver program (refer to BSW 722 policy).

Recruiting nurses in Montana is a challenge with nursing shortages nationally. The Department graciously approved a well needed rate increase for Private Duty Nursing in 2018, however this was the only the second increase since 2011. We compete with our large hospitals and clinics for nurses and cannot meet the pay scales they offer to nurses. We expect our nurses to be competent with tasks that are vital to the health, wellbeing and sometimes even livelihood of a child, yet are left to pay them as if they are just out of school with no experiences.

In addition to providing PDN care to the children, our nurses must learn how to effectively work with the families with many dynamics and often strong personalities.

By allowing retainer days for services provided by our nurse we are allowing a sense of security in what they do. They can continue to maintain for a short period of time rather than resigning to seek work elsewhere. Our staff is flexible and is not guaranteed hours. Our nurses deserve the State's support in the work they do. An adult on waiver services receiving PDN, Life Coaches and Habilitation all allow retainer days, yet we have not considered this under EPSDT.

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Please consider a revision to EPSDT PDN for our children to include retainer days.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any other questions or concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Amanda Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amanda" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Hawley".

Amanda Hawley, SHRM-CP, PHR
Medical Staffing Program Manager
Staffing Solutions, a division of A Plus Health Care